

But suppose the Legislature had the right, and thought proper to exercise it, what good would it do? Is public opinion prepared for it? Your Committee think not. It would be impolitic and unwise, as, we believe, it would be unjust and illegal. Such a course would excite our worst fears—producing jealousies and heart—burnings, which time could never heal.

Whenever force has been used, it has been unavailing; there is not a single instance on record, where sumptuary or prohibitory laws, have attained the object desired. England, Scotland and Ireland, launched their barge upon this untried sea, and the laws were regularly enforced; their efficiency was nullified, and they were finally repealed.

If we look to New England—the land of steady habits—we shall find they have had no other effect than to increase crime—espionage—jealousy—and to array in open contest the worse passions of our nature. Indeed, your committee think you cannot reform man by violence; violence engenders violence; producing outbreaks, open ruptures, and general disquiet.

Your committee have, therefore, come to the conclusion, that it must be by moral suasion alone, that the evil can be removed or arrested. This course has been eminently successful. It has power to stay the rushing tide of intemperance—to erect break-waters that shall roll back a current, sweeping in its maddening whirl thousands to the tomb. It has, in a very, great degree, reformed public opinion—strengthened the bonds of social intercourse—thrown over the unfortunate victim of intemperance, the mantle of charity—sustained his unsteady steps—and gently led him into paths of virtue and usefulness. It has made desolate hearths rejoice, and scattered in its train the peaceful smiles of plenteousness. It has shed gladness and joy around the homes of many a heart-stricken mother; and caused flowers to bud, where thorns only grew.